REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 remain pending in this application, with Claims 1, 9 and 10 being independent. Claims 1-4, 9 and 10 have been amended herein. Support for the features added to the independent claims can be found in the specification at least at page 34, line 22 to page 36, line 8 and in Figures 20A-20C. Of course, the claims are not intended to be limited in scope to this preferred embodiment.

Claims 1 and 3-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0041081 (Horii et al.). Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0030692 (Uchida) in view of Horii et al.. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Horii et al. is directed to a method of treating liquids in ink jet recording using two printing liquids, with the second printing liquid being capable of causing coagulation when mixed with the first printing liquid. The mixture includes a coagulation-thickening preventing agent which prevents the coagulation. In one embodiment, a liquid storage part recovers printing liquids discharged from the recording head and includes a liquid absorber. However, Applicants submit that the coagulation inhibitor in Horii et al. is a chelating agent, not a coagulation inhibitor inhibiting coagulation of the colorant contained in the ink by preventing contact among particles of the colorant due to an effect of steric hindrance, as is recited in independent Claims 1,

9 and 10.

A chelating agent would be inferior to a coagulation inhibitor that has an effect of steric hindrance. In particular, Applicants submit that the stability of the chelating agent is dependent upon a pH level of the liquid, so chelating is not always performed, depending on the pH level of a liquid mixed with ink. In such case, the coagulation inhibiting effect could not be achieved. On the other hand, a coagulation inhibitor having an effect of steric hindrance is effective regardless of the pH level.

Thus, Horii et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Uchida is directed to an ink jet recording apparatus including a platen M2001 and a platen absorber M2006 for absorbing and holding preliminarily ejected ink. However, even assuming, arguendo, one of ordinary skill in the art would utilize the coagulation preventing agent of Horii et al. noted above in the ink jet recording apparatus of Uchida, the combination would still fail to result in the claimed features noted above as being deficient in Horii et al. alone.

Thus, Claims 1 and 9 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 and § 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1, 9 and 10. Dependent Claims 2-8 and 11 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent

claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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